

Layer Preschool

Queen Elizabeth Hall, New Cut, Layer-de-la-Haye, COLCHESTER, Essex, CO2 0JU

Inspection date	07/01/2015
Previous inspection date	07/03/2014

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	4
	Previous inspection:	3
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		3
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		4
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		4

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is inadequate

- The provider is unable to provide evidence of vetting processes that have been completed to ensure staff looking after children are suitable to do so.
- The routine of the day is not efficiently organised. This means children's learning is not consistently promoted and play is often interrupted.
- The provider has not ensured that the management team has the skills required to supervise the practice and deployment of the staff effectively to ensure that children are adequately supervised at all times.
- Opportunities for children to practise their early writing skills in everyday play are not fully maximised.
- Children have limited access to resources to enable them to self-select and initiate their own play and learning. The presentation of activities is uninspiring and therefore, children are not consistently challenged, which sometimes means they lack enthusiasm and interest to explore and have a go.

It has the following strengths

- Children are happy and confident. They settle quickly because they have warm attachments with their key person and other adults caring for them.
- Staff are committed to establishing positive relationships with parents. This includes the provision of home visits before children attend to discuss children's individual needs and requirements.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities in the main playroom and the outdoor learning environment.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to on the day of the inspection. The inspector engaged in discussions with the children and staff.
- The inspector looked at a sample of children's development records, planning documentation and some written policy documents.
- The inspector held a meeting with the manager and a member of the committee. The inspector also checked evidence of staff's suitability and qualifications.
- The inspector conducted a joint observation of children's activities with the manager.

Inspector

Lynn A Hartigan

Full report

Information about the setting

Layer Preschool was registered in 1972 and is on the Early Years Register. It is situated within the Queen Elizabeth village hall, in Layer-de-la-Haye, Essex. The setting is managed by a committee and the pre-school manager. The pre-school serves the local area and is accessible to all children. It operates from two halls and there is an enclosed area available for outdoor play. The pre-school employs six members of childcare staff. Of these, five hold appropriate early years qualifications. The pre-school opens Monday to Friday during school term time. Sessions are from 9am until 3pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 57 children attending who are in the early years age group. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It supports a number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage the provider must:

- ensure that people looking after children and the committee have completed vetting procedures and provide records to evidence that they are suitable to fulfil the requirements of their role
- ensure that staff are deployed appropriately so that children are safe and their needs are met
- ensure that the organisation of routines, in particular, at snack time and in preparation for outdoor play, is improved so that children have more opportunities for sustained play and active learning, for example, by reducing waiting times to ensure that children do not become bored and restless.

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- include opportunities for children to write for purpose during role play and other activities provided
- focus more precisely on developing ways for younger children to access and select resources to ensure that all children can choose resources independently to support their spontaneous play
- improve the presentation of activities provided to ensure they are inspiring and offer sufficient challenge to meet the needs of the children attending.

Inspection judgements**How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend**

Children are cared for by a team of staff who know the children well and are attentive to their emotional and physical needs. Children generally enjoy their time at pre-school and are provided with an educational programme both indoors and outdoors that covers all areas of learning. The provision of some quality resources support children in their development. Children sit comfortably and work well together using a computer. They wait patiently and take turns. They have fun helping one another to complete the simple program using the mouse with skill. Young children sit in the cosy book area and enjoy stories with their friends. They show interest in the treasure baskets and are fascinated with the shells provided as they excitedly listen for the sea. Older children show sustained levels of concentration as they complete floor puzzles. Children have a go at using stencils,

but a lack of well-presented materials and pens that work, mean children quickly lose interest. While some activities are offered to support children's early writing skills, there are fewer opportunities to routinely access paper and pencils to mark make in everyday play, for example, when playing outdoors and in the role play. In general, staff members are skilful in how they pose questions to ensure children are encouraged to think and are given time to respond. For example, children are encouraged to think about what words are used when making requests, rather than just reminding them to say please and thank you. The organisation of the session, in regards to including opportunities to play outdoors, circle time and the provision of snack, has a negative impact on children's play. This is because their activities are interrupted. This limits children's choices, as children who prefer to continue with their play are not effectively supported throughout the session.

Children's communication, language, emotional and social skills are supported adequately. This is because the importance of these areas of learning and development are recognised by staff to support children in their future learning and in preparation for school. For example, children are confident, secure and settled. They ask questions and confidently talk to visitors and include them in games. Children listen and follow instructions when participating in group activities at circle time. Children are encouraged to develop their independent skills, such as putting on aprons before painting or their coats and shoes to play outside.

The manager works hard to establish positive partnerships with parents. They are welcomed into pre-school and encouraged to stay and play if they choose. They are also invited to participate in organised outings, such as visits to the wood. The child's key person documents useful information with regard to the children's interests and abilities when they first attend. Staff complete regular observations of children's development and these demonstrate that most children are working within the typical range expected for their age, taking into account their starting points. This includes children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, who receive good support. Learning journals are available to parents on request and staff share the next steps in children's learning and their termly reports. Parents are positively encouraged to contribute what they know about their child. This includes their ongoing progress at home using an achievements board to document their observation, and when staff complete a progress check for children aged between two and three years.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

The safeguarding and safety issues identified in the leadership and management section of this report impact on the staff's ability to promote children's well-being effectively. Children arrive and are happy to see their key person as they have formed close attachments to them. They settle quickly as a result of effective strategies in place, which includes a home visit to meet their key person before they start at pre-school. Parents are encouraged to play an active role in the pre-school's settling-in procedures, ensuring that key persons are provided with clear information about their children's home life, interests and abilities. Staff recognise the importance of developing children's emotional well-being. Staff achieve this through clear and consistent praise and encouragement. Generally,

children behave well and understand what is expected of them.

Children excitedly arrive at pre-school. The staff work well within the restrictions in place with regard to the premises to ensure it is welcoming and child friendly. Activities are set out ready for children's arrival and they have some opportunities to independently access resources to initiate their own play and learning. However, these are limited. In addition, the presentation of some activities lack inspiration, challenge, and therefore, do not capture children's interest or provide quality learning experiences and keep children engaged and motivated. Since the last inspection, the provider has ensured children play in a safe environment. For example, a lock has been fitted to ensure children cannot access the kitchen and staff complete a daily check of the premises.

Children understand the need to wash their hands after using the toilet as this is reinforced through the everyday routines. They learn about being healthy and are able to exercise daily in fresh air. Drinking water is available for children to access throughout the session. Healthy and nutritious snacks are offered and consideration is given to every child's dietary requirements. Since the last inspection, improvements have been made with regard to children's involvement and independence at snack time. Children are now encouraged to serve themselves, count plates and pour drinks. However, the provision and routine of snack time has a negative impact on children's play. They do not always decide for themselves when they are hungry and have to stop what they are doing to have their snack. This means children spend time queuing to wash hands and to serve themselves. Children's health and hygiene is promoted. For example, staff remind them of the importance of washing hands before meals and when using tissues for their nose to prevent the spread of infection. Staff teach children how to keep safe as they are reminded not to run indoors or use the decking outdoors as it is too slippery. Children, including children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are supported in their next stage of learning and emotionally ready to move onto school. This is because staff have established positive links with local schools and invite teachers into the pre-school to meet the children.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision

The lack of effective communication and support by the provider means there is a breach in the safeguarding requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The provider cannot demonstrate that all members of staff and committee members are suitable to fulfil the requirements of their role. This is because evidence to confirm that staff have completed suitability checks, which include an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check, are not available. This has a significant impact on children's safety. In contrast, children are protected from harm as the manager and the team of staff demonstrate a secure knowledge of their individual responsibilities with regards to child protection. They are able to confidently discuss the possible signs of abuse and the process to follow should they have concerns. The designated person completes appropriate training to enable them to support staff through any safeguarding issues.

The pre-school committee and manager support staff in their own professional

development. A process is in place to supervise staff and they are required to attend regular team meetings to discuss the educational programme they deliver to the children. The staff do have a reasonable knowledge and understanding of the learning and development requirements. The manager has implemented a process to monitor staff practice and assess how well children are progressing. Managers and staff are also now beginning to use self-evaluation to review and monitor the provision. However, the manager has to remind staff of their roles as they are not consistent and are often slow to respond to children. For example, children become bored and throw toys, they run around the hall and while they enjoy the opportunity to flow freely from indoors to outdoors, staff do not react and respond to the children quickly or deploy themselves effectively to ensure children's well-being and the smooth running of the pre-school.

Partnerships with parents are secure. Parents are keen to express their satisfaction about the pre-school and the staff. They comment that their children have settled well, are happy and making progress. Parents comment that staff are friendly, approachable and supportive. Parents are given opportunities to meet with their children's key person prior to starting at preschool, informally on a daily basis and more formally at open evenings. This gives parents the opportunity to discuss their child's care and development with staff. Parents are encouraged to share information about learning that takes place at home, with their child's key person to enable them to fully support each child's progress. Following the last inspection the manager now ensures all appropriate parental written consent is in place to ensure children's welfare. The manager has systems in place for working in partnership with other early years settings that children attend and this enables the pre-school to complement the learning that takes place across other aspects of children's lives. In addition, the positive links with the local schools, mean children are well prepared and confident when moving onto school.

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. We re-inspect nurseries and pre-schools judged as requires improvement within 12 months of the date of inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected again within six months of the date of this inspection.
Met		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Setting details

Unique reference number	203940
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	971831
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	32
Number of children on roll	57
Name of provider	Layer Pre-School Committee
Date of previous inspection	07/03/2014
Telephone number	01206 734348

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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